



Nation

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THE GREAT DARKNESS



Simon and Garfunkel wrote a song with the classic line, "Hello Darkness, my old friend." To me, it means the inevitability of something that you may not want to encounter. But it's there as a familiar spectre nonetheless.

It was there lately when Mario Dumont, Leader of the ADQ (Action Democratique du Quebec) came out with his statement that hydro-electric mega-projects were back on the agenda if his party is elected in the coming provincial election.

Talk about being out of the loop. Super Mario must have slept through the Great Whale hydro-electric fight in the 1990s. Both Quebec and Hydro-Quebec took a beating on that one.

It's obvious that Dumont makes his policies on the fly. But this takes some imagination. A team of drunken monkeys tapping away on a rickety Underwood could have written a better policy.

Sources within the Grand Council of the Crees say they have tried to have meetings with Dumont, only to have been ignored. The *Nation* has likewise requested an interview with Dumont. We've also been ignored. The contempt and arrogance is telling.

It's clear this man would take Quebec back to an earlier, and uglier, era. Back to the dark days of imposed mega-projects, the environment and Cree rights be damned (or dammed). Dumont's attitude smacks of paternalistic colonialism, a replay of Robert Bourassa's megalomania mixed with a healthy dose of Maurice Duplessis's contempt for democracy.

Some might see this as a surprising turnaround. Just months before he was actively courting the minority vote in a meeting to which this paper was invited

and even hopeful.

But he doesn't walk the talk. He promised minorities they would have a chance to help form his party's policy platform. Perhaps it is select minorities that will get to do so. But his complete unwillingness to meet with any Cree makes one rightly suspicious.

Will it take another trip or two to the United States to make Dumont see the light? Given the actions of 9-11, with terrorist acts in the United States, it would not be difficult to point out to the Americans the dangers of putting all your eggs in one basket in the energy field.

Our audience would even be more receptive than before and the Grand Council of the Crees have expressed a willingness and desire to continue the fight if need be.

As an engine of the marketplace, the idea that the Great Whale Hydro-electric Project could be revived might well be the very spark that would kill the Quebec dream rather than giving it the needed energy it needs to succeed.

In short, vote anything but Dumont, our future depends upon it.

By Will Nicholls

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ON THE COVER

Eeyou Istchee
Photographer: Will Nicholls
Cover Design:
Alex McMary



FAMILY ORCHARD

I had to deliver pictures to the local daycare to help my little girl with her family tree and it got me thinking. What of my family tree? I had done a lot of research on my paternal side and I wondered how to find out the tree on the maternal side and I went quickly to work and went web searching. To my amazement, I ended up on the Nunatsiak News homepage and discovered that there was a mountain named after my late grandfather Ernie's father or brother on Baffin Island somewhere. I also noticed that there was a Lake Herodier in Northern Quebec near Kuujjuak.

I thought, what if I asked people in the north about the name Herodier and simply explain that I was looking for my grandfather's brother who lived somewhere up north. I emailed the paper and went to bed afterwards. About a week later, I decided to check my email and to my further astonishment and glee, there were dozens of letters, including pictures of my grand uncle in the north. I sent mail back to them and told them that I would get back to them and confirm whether or not that Herodier Kalluk was the man I was looking for.

I discovered that there were more relatives living in Resolute Bay and originally, they came from Pond Inlet and then moved to Resolute Bay in the 50's. From there, the family grew by leaps and bounds and now number over a hundred. I am happy to say that to all my family (Herodiers and all) from Fort George that we probably number close to that amount. So the family tree grew another tree, instead of a just a branch. Now it is looking more and more like an orchard instead of a lone tree. My grandfather had other brothers and sisters and they have grown exponentially and the orchard is looking more like a forest of genetically entwined people.

After emailing back to my new found extension to my family tree, I felt that



somehow my world had got much larger instead of smaller, as the saying goes. It could be that the internet had made it so, and in just moments instead of years, I had managed to answer that question that I never really got around to asking myself, from whom do I come from? From a large piece of history and nearly a century of family growth, the travels of our ancestor, Gaston Herodier and the life that he lived, before electricity and motorized travel, when inhabitants of the north never heard of the south and non-natives were few and far apart, is part of the history of our family.

It still amazes me today and at this moment; to think back to the days when the Titanic still floated (on her maiden voyage) and sank to the depths of the cold Atlantic waters and Inuit and Cree were the best fur harvesters for 200 years and more and that the life we still cherish and struggle to maintain as a traditional lifestyle, stems from those past years of interaction between four separate cultures, the Cree, the Inuit, the French and the English. Such is the history and past of our family, as it grows into the next generation and beyond the forest of humanity.

Perhaps that it is just fate that made me wonder about who I am and where I come from, perhaps it is more than that, a bloodline that crossed the ocean and spilled into the north, to intermingle and entrench itself into the very fabric of the history of Northern Quebec and Baffin Island. If there are those who read this and come from Resolute Bay or Pond Inlet, I say hello on behalf of the Herodiers of Fort George and hope to meet you one day.

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EDITORIAL BOARD
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LAYOUT & PRODUCTION
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AD LAYOUT
Aaron MacDevitt

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS
Jennifer Westlake
Danielle Valade

THANKS TO: Air Creebec

WHERE TO REACH US: POSTMASTER:

5505 ST-LAURENT, #3018
MONTREAL, QC., H2T 1S6

PLEASE ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

THE NATION PRODUCTION OFFICE
5678 PARC AVE. P.O. Box 48036
MONTREAL, CANADA H2V 4S8

EDITORIAL & ADS

TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914

ADS- VAL D'OR-CHIBOUGAMAU REGION
TEL.: 819-825-1172, FAX: 19-825-1333

THE NATION HEAD OFFICE
P.O. Box 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

Editorial: nation@beesum.ca
Ads: sales@beesum-communications.com
Classifieds:

beesum@beesum-communications.com
Web: www.beesum-communications.com

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Nation

MARCH EMPOWERS WOMEN IN VANCOUVER

NEWS

Valentine's Day is a special occasion down here on the mean streets of Vancouver. For the last 12 years, various women in the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver's skid row community ravaged by drugs, violence and poverty, have organized the Womens' Memorial March in order to remember the women who have gone missing from this neighbourhood. In all, 62 women have gone missing and unaccounted-for off these streets since 1978. Most of them are heroin users and sex workers; and most of them are Native.

On Feb. 24th, hundreds took to the streets for a procession through the worst blocks of the Downtown Eastside. They stopped at a dozen locations where some of the missing women were last seen, including the doorway of the "Funky Winker Beans" bar, a back alley, and the lobby of a womens' shelter. At each stop, a rose was laid and the names of the missing were called out, while elders did a smudging.



After two hours occupying the streets, the crowd gathered in front of the RCMP station on Main and Hastings, where several speakers, including some family members of the missing, addressed the crowd. Fay Blaney, a womens' and aboriginal rights activist and professor, mixed anger with her desire to memorialize the dead.

"We stand together to honour the hopes and the dreams of our sisters, and to honour the lives they have left behind," Blaney said to cheers. "We stand together to ask blessings from their grandmothers, the grandmothers of this Coast Salish territory. But we should also memorialize our sisters who are the walking wounded in these streets. Let us me our sisters who will fall this year as result of the brutal government policies. Let us remember our sisters who will lose their children today grandmothers. Let us think about our sisters who will be end up on the streets, when they have no homes to go to tonight grandmothers, and who will be incarcerated, grandmothers. And finally, let us address the loss of the Ministry for Women's Equality and what that means for women in this province, and let us address the loss of funding to womens' shelters."

She continued, "I want to speak for a moment about what this is not about for me; this is not about increased budgets for police investigation at the Pickton farm. We don't need more funding for brown

bureaucrats to do the bidding for the government and for the police, for a neo-colonialist system that figures that a dead woman is 'just another dead Indian.' And we do not need a red light district so we can hide our sisters from the eyes of the world. And we don't need a mainstream media to trivialize the lives of our sisters."

The story of Vancouver's "missing women" has become familiar to all Canadians. Last year, the police arrested Robert Pickton, a local pig and sheep farmer, who is currently in pre-trial, accused of the murder of 15 women whose DNA has been found in the soil of his farm. But it's clear that for the women living in the DES, the story of violence doesn't begin and end with Pickton.

Though the procession through the streets held a sombre tone, there was a sense of vindication as well, a feeling for many that their voices are no longer crying out in the dark. Many feel that it was public outcry that finally prompted

the police to make inquiries at the Pickton farm.

Marlene Trick is a community organizer based in Vancouver's Carnegie Community Centre, and an organizer at "Breaking the Silence Against Violence in the Downtown Eastside." She hopes the Pickton case will give them a chance to keep the ravaged neighbourhood in the public eye.

"This march started up as a way for the women living in the community, who really wanted to stand up and take action against the violence that was happening against women in their community, to feel empowered," she says. "One of the ways they were able to do that was by organizing a march; it was always a small gathering. Last year when the Pickton story broke was two weeks prior to Feb. 14th, and the march was larger than previous years. And this year, it was much larger than has ever been, really."

While Valentines' Day here is a chance for people to remember their sisters, lovers, friends, moms, aunts and nieces who have succumbed to the "hell on earth" of Vancouver's low track.

"That's where I think it's really important to have the inquiry into why he wasn't investigated years back; it could have saved many womens' lives," Trick says. "For this to never happen again the police departments [will need to] change the way they work, they won't be able to ignore

disadvantaged communities." Down here, it is widely believed that Robert Pickton wasn't acting alone. Beyond this, violence and abuse are facts of daily life for the women- for all the residents - of this neighbourhood, even as they live in the public eye.

The Story Comes Out

The elders of Chisasibi have said that the time has come to tell their story. And the people of Chisasibi have responded. The long awaited double cd *Voices of the Land* tells the story of Chisasibi in a truly novel way, and it has finally been released to the public.

Held Feb. 24 in Chisasibi, the official un-official release was attended by Chief Abraham Rupert and many others. Some of the musicians who took part in the project provided traditional music. The release was captured by the local television crew and shown Feb. 28 on the local channel. It was very well received by the community despite even though it was held at the same time as other local events. Sales were brisk and the reviews were glowing by those who have had the chance to listen to it.

The distributors say their main focus is on their community and want to ensure that they have first dibs on the homegrown product. Within the next couple of weeks it will be available in all Northern stores in the other communities and deals are in the works to have it available nationally as they have received requests for the cd from all across the country.

Bertie Wapachee is one of the four members on the Advisory Committee for the cd. "This project is so unique, the way it was done to put it all together," he said. "It's one example of brilliance. Through spoken word and music, it chronicles the events that led the people to be who they are today. It reaches the deepest wounds and gives people the opportunity to deal with them. Every native community has been through similar events and can use this as their own and start thinking of ways to tell their own story...I'm very proud to be involved."

Roger House, coordinator, producer and musician of the cd, said they "wanted it to be special, we have a rich heritage and wanted to share it with the world. We hope we can break ground for other people who want to do this sort of thing."

The cd includes a 16-page booklet with photos and background stories, costs \$35 and is well worth it. For more info, contact Roger House at (819) 855-2473.

By Melora Koepke

Encouraging self sufficiency by way of meaningful self-governance

"Education" in Cree Communities:

Clearly, the Quebec Ministry of Education has made no real effort to ensure quality education in northern Quebec's Cree communities.

Cree students are indifferent to their own educations. Those who do graduate and intend to continue their educations are very often made to write entrance exams and some are not accepted into post-secondary programs at all. Our students deserve a quality of education unparalleled by most of North America. Why, then, do we measure Cree students by imposed European standards? Why do we not exceed MEQ standards, so that our students excel when they attend college down south?

In Mistissini, Cree students face prejudiced, arbitrarily confrontational teachers on a daily basis. Some teachers will even go so far as to conspire to sabotage particular students' educations. Certain teachers even claim to be injured and are subsidized by the Cree School Board (CSB) to do nothing, while the CSB is then obligated to employ additional teaching staff. New administrators are verbally harassed or otherwise discouraged by a small group of local "teachers"; and so, nothing changes. Discipline is not possible due to the teachers' collective agreement (union).

This being said, it becomes apparent that neither the MEQ, nor Quebec's provincial legislation consider quality education in Cree communities to be a priority. Quebec has no interest in educating the Cree properly, because eventually we would become more self-sufficient; that is, not entirely dependent on Quebec infrastructure and tax dollars; that is, not wholly subservient to Quebecois business interests.

Confederation as Cree Self-Empowerment:

The Quebec government would sooner make frivolous expenditures on the language police, or mounting paramilitary incursions onto Mohawk territory, than honestly help to initiate viable economic and political infrastructure in the north. Quebec seems intent on preventing its indigenous peoples from seeking realistic, long-term solutions to their socio-economic disparities at all costs. While Quebecois legislators openly proclaim a "God given right" to use all of Quebec's natural resources as they see fit.

Labour is offered to members of the indigenous group that is directly impacted; but no real long-term opportunity is created. In the case of the Cree, logging and dam-building is great for creating short-term manual labour that you can contract high-school dropouts to do by the hectare, but it produces very little sustainable infrastructure in Cree communities; rather, it allows Quebecois fiscal organizations to delay the consumption of their own local natural resources by first exploiting resources that are supposedly under Cree jurisdiction.

The most apparent and therefore least discussed solution to our predicament is separation from the province of Quebec. Our

nations owe it to the coming generations to take control of our education systems, health-care and natural resources. Perhaps it is time for the Cree and Inuit of northern Quebec to band together at the regional level, and form a new Canadian province; thereby, removing our educations from Quebec's jurisdiction.

Confederation ensures that the Cree will not be dragged along the ugly, downward spiral that is Quebec nationalism.

In The Aftermath:

Any such separation would undoubtedly cause additional resentment among the non-indigenous population of Quebec. Inevitably, Quebec's provincial legislation would see it as a betrayal and use it as an excuse to back out on their obligations, put forth by the new Quebec/Cree agreement. Additionally we could expect to see the withdrawal of Quebec health service in Cree communities.

In the short term, perhaps the agreement could be re-negotiated on a *province-to-province* basis. However, hopefully such measures will not be necessary, as our provincial status would entitle us to Canadian tax dollars. These federal funds can then be diverted toward improving education, health-care and living conditions in northern communities without the incessant impudence of the Christian Quebecois agenda or its related bureaucracy and prejudices.

By: A Concerned Cree Youth from Mistissini

Let us know:

Is there a gathering, festival, tournament, powwow, or other community event that you want people to know about?

Is there something that the company or organization you work for is doing that should be noticed by others in Native America?

Is there someone in your community such as an Elder or other role model that you think deserves to be recognized?

What are your politicians up to?

Is there something that is hurting Native people and needs to be brought to light so that it can be put to an end?

What issues (local, national, and international) do you think aren't getting the press they deserve?

Do you have a story that would make people laugh?

Is there something you think is newsworthy or deserving of attention?

Call *the Nation* at
514-272-3077

Ask for Will or Steve

**** Confidentiality assured ****

NATIVE WOMEN'S SHELTER KEEPS DOORS OPEN

by tsa

There's money for everyone in Quebec in the run-up to an election, it appears. Everyone except the 100 women's shelters in Quebec. Though studies have found them to be severely underfunded, they share a budget of \$29 million.

Last week, the Quebec government handed out \$556 million to front line services, including Local Employment Centres (CLEs), Client Contact Centres (CCEs), local health clinics (CLSCs) and retirement homes, but failed to provide more funding for women's shelters. This week the Association of Quebec Women's Shelters announced a work slowdown that will see their members provide only emergency and crisis intervention services.

This means that women in need will not be accompanied to their medical or legal appointments, there will be no assessments of abuse situations and no violence prevention programs will be conducted. The slowdown is aimed at getting another \$31 million from the provincial government to ensure that the services needed are available.

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal will be open for business, however. No work slowdowns are planned. They are not part of the Association of Women's Shelters of Quebec, though they are provincially funded.

The shelter provides 16 beds for native women in Montreal as well as offering a culture-specific healing program called "Moving towards the 7th Generation." Through this program they are able to offer a plethora of different workshops from anger management to parenting workshops to one-on-one therapy. The funding for this is received from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The shelter is always full and has to refuse women on a daily basis, referring them to other shelters in Montreal that do not have the necessary funds to meet their needs.

Says Thelma Nelson, Interim Executive director at the shelter: "We only have one native women's shelter, if we had five shelters and more beds then maybe we could participate in a slowdown. We won't participate in a slowdown unless our board decides that we should. Personally, as a native woman, I couldn't do that, our women need these services."



Police seize illegal alcohol in Kuujuaq

The Kativik Regional Police Force seized three shipments of alcohol destined for Kangirsuk at Kuujuaq airport Feb. 24.

Police netted a total of 24 66-ounce bottles of hard spirits, two cases of kin-sized beer, one 40-ounce bottle of Amaretto and one four-litre package of wine.

The shipments were intended to arrive in Kangirsuk where the junior men's Ungava hockey tournament was to take place during the weekend.

Municipal leaders of the community told police they were very grateful for the seizures, which allowed the hockey tournament to proceed in an orderly fashion.

AFN Chief visits Grassy Narrows blockade

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Matthew Coon Come was in Grassy Narrows First Nation (Ontario) Feb. 27 to show support for the road blockade and political action being taken by the community to protect their rights.

The National Chief spent the day at the blockade and visited the community to hear from the Chief Councilors and community members and discussed steps to

resolve the outstanding issues.

The roadblock was set up late last year by community members at the Abitibi Consolidated clear cutting access road on Highway 671 (approximately five kilometres from Grassy Narrows.)

Residents say they were never properly consulted about the license granted to Abitibi Consolidated for clear cutting activities on Grassy Narrows' Customary Lands. They say clear cutting infringes on their inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights to hunt, fish, and trap in their traditional territories.

No Exclusive Access On Caniapiscau River

Quebec's Minister Responsible for Wildlife and Parks says privatizing the Caniapiscau River is out of the question. Last month, the Nation reported Club Chambeau requested exclusive access to fish along the Caniapiscau River.

The area is of primary interest to both the Cree and the Naskapi, meaning that it impacts on the traditional activities of the people. The Cree, Inuit and Naskapi members of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC) had approved the request in a telephone conference vote held July 18, 2000, while the



Conseil Cré de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
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 Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay is a Cree entity responsible for the administration of health and social services for all residents under its jurisdiction comprising nine Cree communities and their surrounding territories. We are presently seeking innovative candidates, dynamic leaders with compassion, dedication and operational know-how to fill the following managerial positions.

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — ADMINISTRATION (Second Posting)

The holder of this position ensures, with the collaboration of the Assistant Executive Directors - Health & Social Services and Public Health, the planning and evaluation, and oversees the organization, coordination, delivery and control of the organization's human, financial, material and information resources, with the objective of providing services to and supporting and enabling all aspects of Health & Social Services and Public Health staff to fulfill their goal of delivering health and social services, and public health programs to the people of James Bay. He/she carries out the aforementioned administrative services in a staff/functional manner.

The incumbent's role is primarily at the Regional Board level in terms of external scanning; strategic planning; organizing, coordinating and evaluating the administrative functional services; communications with external parties; resource development, and; the coordination and overseeing of capital project management. He/she also ensures and oversees the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal Administrative Resources Group's operations and outcomes.

The incumbent is a member of the Executive Committee and the General Management Committee, and chairs the Administrative Resources Group's Management Committee and the Budget Committee.

Qualification Requirements

- Fluent in English and French. Fluency in Cree is an asset.
 - Masters degree in administration and 4 years experience in senior management in a health or social setting.
- OR
- Bachelor degree in administration and 6 years experience in management in a health or social setting, or public organization.

Working Conditions:

You will be based in Chisasibi. The remuneration and social benefits are according to the policies applicable to administrators in the MHSSQ health and social services network, and the CBHSSJB (class under revision). In addition to the usual fringe benefits, the employer provides the housing; defrays the moving and storage costs, and; provides 3 or 4 trips per year to the point of hiring, for employees recruited further than 50 kilometers. There is a northern allowance of \$6,640 or \$10,622 (depending on dependants).

If you are interested in contributing to the continued development of our organization, please forward your curriculum vitae and a covering letter, before 5 pm on March 14, 2003 to the following address:

Mrs. Annie Bobbish
 Head of Human Resources Management
 Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay
 P.O. Box 250 ; Chisasibi, Quebec J0M 1E0
 Tel: (819)855-2844 ext. 5340
 Fax: (819) 855-2680
 E-mail: vsnowboy@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES (Second Posting)

The Role

- Collaborates in the planning and evaluation, and organizes, coordinates, implements and controls all activities regarding the organization's financial management with the objective of providing services to and supporting and enabling all aspects of Service staff to fulfill their goal of delivering health and social services to the people of James Bay.
- Ensures, under the supervision of the Director of Financial Resources, the operational management for the budget operations, internal controls, banking, payroll, accounting and statistics to ensure an efficient financial management.
- Contributes to HRD initiatives that further Cree employment in the department.

Your Profile:

- A leadership style which encourages staff participation and commitment to organizational objectives, and the valuing of the dedication of the staff;
- A leader with excellent communication and human relation skills who can lead teams to achieve results;

Requirements

- Bachelor degree in administration with a finance specialization, and a C.A., C.G.A. or C.M.A. designation (or working towards it), and 3 years experience in financial management in a health or social setting, or public organization;
- Knowledge of the Quebec public administration financial management regulations; knowledge of those for Regional Board, CLSC, Youth Protection, Hospital and Readaptation programs is an asset;
- Fluent in English and French. Fluency in Cree is an asset;

members of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC) had approved the request in a telephone conference vote held July 18, 2000, while the Grand Council of the Crees did not support it.

The deal seemed to be on its way to approval but the Quebec Ministry of Parks and Wildlife issued a press release stating that they have "no intention of privatizing the river," or any others in the province. Jimmy Morneau, the general director of the regional municipality of Caniapiscau, says a very public outcry from citizens in the area has halted the deal.

"We have the same position as the natives regarding the protection of the resources," Morneau says. The municipality is still waiting to hear from the Minister responsible for Parks and Wildlife regarding this issue even though the government states in their press release that they are "currently engaged in constructive talks with representatives of the area..."

Obviously there has to be a consensus in the region regarding such a project." The Director of Communications for the Ministry of Parks and Wildlife says that it is a very "hot topic" right now and they are currently evaluating what to do. Over the next two or three months they will consult groups who have an interest in this area – the Naskapi, the Cree, the MRC, the municipality of Fermont, Club Chambeau and other outfitters – to try to come up with an alternative proposal.

John Mameamskum, the Director-General of the Naskapi Nation and member of the HFTCC says, "Quebec has been pushing the deal for many years and we've been very reluctant to approve any kind of deal that gives a carte blanche to an outfitter who has no respect for hunting, fishing and trapping rights... I'm very glad the Minister came to his senses and said no."

The next meeting of the HFTCC will be in March and the issue will be brought up again regarding further course of action.

Crees express dismay over ADQ statements

The Cree leadership says a speech given in Montreal by Action Democratique leader Mario Dumont Feb. 27 could jeopardize the relationship with the province. If elected, Dumont said he intends to push ahead with the Great Whale Project, without even a phone call to the Cree leaders.

"We thought that the days of unilateral actions were past," said Grand Chief Ted Moses. "I am shocked by the statements of Mr. Dumont. We will have no choice but to oppose such development plans. We intend to follow a path of cooperation with the Quebec Nation, but this puts the future in doubt."

He said the Cree fought a long battles against the Great Whale project and would not hesitate to do so again.

"It is not that the Cree are against development, we are against armchair planning on projects that impact livelihoods, wildlife, the environment, cultures, and the general social well being of our population," stated Bill Namagoose, the executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement contained an agenda for cooperative development and the Grand Council says the "Paix des Braves" Agreement is the implementation of that agenda. The council says Dumont is demonstrating that he is incapable of addressing development issues with First Nations.

"We want to develop our communities and we want to protect the land from inappropriately scaled development," stated Namagoose.

"This is why the Paix des Braves cancels the NBR Project, while approving the EM1 project. Mister Dumont seems to want to return to the bad old days. If this is his plan, to follow in the footsteps of former Premier Bourassa, then we will have no choice but to fight."

Aboriginal Business Summit

Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault wants Natives to become good capitalists. All they have to lose is their shirts.

"The time has come to remove the obstacles that keep Aboriginal people from seizing the opportunity to shape their own futures,"

Briefs

Nault said in an address Feb. 20 to the Aboriginal Business Summit in Toronto. "The time has come to provide Aboriginal people with the tools they need to manage their own affairs and run their own lives."

The summit is dedicated to strengthening Aboriginal participation in Canada's economy. It was attended by over 250 corporate business people, Aboriginal and government leaders. Presentations and speeches were made by Chief Ted Moses of the Grand Council of the Crees, Bernd Christmas, CEO of Membertou Development Corporation and Ray Wanoch of the Metis Nation of Alberta.

Bob Dixon of Niigon Technology, who has a joint venture with Husky Mold Injection at Moose Deer Point in Northern Ontario, said he would like to increase the opportunity for American Fortune 500 companies to do business with Aboriginal Businesses. In the US, the Minorities Suppliers Act, allows companies that buy from minority owned and run companies earn points, which are then converted into tax breaks with the government. Dixon would like to see some of the business come north with the American companies earning the same tax breaks by purchasing from Aboriginal businesses.



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Chikaapaash and the Sun

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Chikaapaash was now married. His hunt for squirrels never ceased. One time when he shot his arrow at a squirrel up in a large tamarack tree, his arrow got stuck. He climbed the tree to fetch his arrow. As he got higher up, he blew at the top of the tree. Magically, the tree grew taller. As he climbed up, he kept blowing at the treetop and the tree stretched higher into the sky. He was very high up now. He reached the land up in the sky. He got off the tree and walked upon the land up in the sky. There were many tracks all around. He also saw huge squirrels scamper about. After observing this wonderful new land, he climbed back down the tree. He eventually reached the land where he had come from. He headed for home.

When Chikaapaash arrived at home, he said to his older sister, "I've discovered an amazing new land for us to live. The squirrels are huge and the land is remarkably beautiful. We'll move to this new place." His sister agreed.

Chikaapaash, his sister and his wives all walked to the tamarack tree. It was not very tall. Chikaapaash told his sister to lead the way climbing the tree. His older sister went to the tree and started climbing. Chikaapaash's two wives followed and Chikaapaash was last to climb. His two wives became dizzy as they got higher. In their dizzy spells, Chikaapaash's wives fell from the tree but Chikaapaash caught them each time and revived them. His sister was doing fine. She kept on climbing. Finally, they all reached the land up in the sky and Chikaapaash announced, "This is the place we'll stay."

Chikaapaash hunted for squirrels. One time, he noticed a well-trodden path. He wondered who was using this trail. Chikaapaash lay down across the trail and waited. After resting for a while, he heard someone walking towards him demanding, "Get out of my way." Chikaapaash firmly said, "No. I'm not getting up." "I cannot change my path. This is the path I always walk." Chikaapaash didn't move and said, "Walk over me. I'm not going to move." As Chikaapaash lay across the path, the heat intensified. All of Chikaapaash's clothes shrunk and shriveled. It was the Sun that walked over him. Chikaapaash went home. He was really angry.

Chikaapaash asked his sister for “*shishtikw*.” But his sister didn’t know what he wanted. She kept handing him objects. But Chikaapaash kept asking for the “*shishtikw*.” She handed him everything that was inside the lodge. Finally, she plucked one of her pubic hairs and handed it to him. Chikaapaash accepted it and said, “Yes, this is it.” But she told him, “Don’t you dare run it through your lips.”

Chikaapaash left with his sister's pubic hair. As he walked away, Chikaapaash began to stretch the pubic hair through his lips. His sister's pubic hair changed into a very strong wire. He approached the path and set his snare. He must have made a very large noose.

One day as the women sat in their lodge, it got very dark suddenly and then back to day again. They began to get frightened as the dark and light kept changing. Chikaapaash was sound asleep. They woke up Chikaapaash because they suspected he

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might have had something to do with this very strange event. They told him, "It gets very dark and quickly back to light again."

Chikaapaash quickly left to check his snare and found the Sun caught. When the Sun struggled towards the west, it got dark and when it moved to the east, it got light again. The Sun was struggling but couldn't break free.

Chikaapaash called upon all the little rodents to help him free the Sun. He told the mice, "Younger brothers, bite through our snare." But all the mice couldn't do it since the Sun was too hot. The last mouse he called upon was the shrew. Chikaapaash blew his magic breath onto the shrew and said, "Younger brother, bite through our snare." The little shrew ran towards the ensnared Sun and gnawed on the snare. The snare snapped and the Sun was free and continued walking on the path.

Chikaapaash declared, "Let it be. Both night and day will exist. When the future humans will walk the earth, they will want time to sleep. After they have set their hunting implements, they will sleep the night. In the morning, they will check their hunting implements again and that is how they'll eat." This is how much I've heard of Chikaapaash. I'm certain I've forgotten much about him. I'm sure there must be other stories about him that I don't remember because I've heard the legend of Chikaapaash a long time ago.

Translator's notes: Powerful shamans used their breath for magical purposes. The word "shishtikw" is possibly the old Cree word for strong cord – and might be the root word for rope "shaashtikwaayaapii." Chikaapaash is now in the realm of the sky. Cree people see the outline of Chikaapaash on the face of the moon.



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First Nations Pavilion

by Steve Bonspiel

No matter what colour your skin is, or what religion you follow, education is important for all of us. In this day and age, education is the key not only for a good job, but also a brighter future. As native people, we are always striving to better ourselves in many ways, with higher learning being the main focus.

The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Temiscamingue at Val D'or wants to help native people achieve their goals, while making their students feel more comfortable at the same time. The proposed project, a First Nations pavilion, is to be built in time for the 2004 session. This pavilion would help native students familiarize themselves with their surroundings on UQAT's campus in Val D'or, while still feeling, to a certain extent, like they haven't left home.

Gale Cyr is a professor at UQAT, and was the primary driving force behind the creation of Quebec's first native pavilion. According to Cyr, the centre has been sorely needed for quite some time. "Part of it was from my own individual and collective experiences as a first nations student," she says. "I quickly realized I had to leave the province to go to school. I had been at home all of my life, and I left at the age of 35 to go back to school."

Originally from the Algonquin community of Temiscamingue, Cyr decided that enough was enough, education is a right, not a privilege, and that First Nations students should be afforded those rights like everyone else. Cyr sits on the accreditation board of the schools of social work of Canada. Traveling across Canada enables her to study the different programs and services available to First Nations across the country, while at the same time helping to provide insight into what is lacking for Quebec's native people.

A lot of time was spent trying to figure out what exactly could be done to better First Nations academic experiences in Quebec in general, and at UQAT in particular. "We saw that putting something in place with no infrastructure wouldn't be good, we needed student services first."

An alumnus at both Canador College and Nipissing University in Ontario, Cyr was able to go back to those institutes and ask for a helping hand. The support she received from the respective schools was helpful, and Cyr hopes that the new pavilion will, in certain ways, surpass the services offered to First Nations

CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL
OF A FIRST NATIONS PAVILION AT THE
CENTRE D'ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES LUCIEN-GLICHE
VAL-D'OR

PRELIMINARY DESIGN
02-3680

JUNE 19, 2002



students at either of those universities.

Gina Richmond, an Algonquin who lives in Val D'or, played a large part in the research aspect of this project. Having recently completed her bachelor's degree in social work at UQAT, she felt there was a strong need for a place that native people could call their own. Looking for a place to do her practicum, Richmond was encouraged by Cyr to "come and do it with us." Seizing the opportunity, she was able to start the groundwork on how to better university life for native people who tend to feel isolated in a foreign environment.

While doing her research at Canador College, as well as B.C., Victoria and Nipissing Universities, Richmond was able to see different services and programs native people in Quebec were missing out on. Some native people choose to go to university elsewhere, but that is not the solution for many French speaking natives. "It's even more difficult for natives whose first or second language is French. We're kind of more isolated because all the information, and everything is in English."

According to both Cyr and Richmond, Quebec's education system is "15 years behind" every other province, and because of that, they realize the importance of having a place where Native students can be themselves, and at the same time, better themselves.

Con't on page 14

"I think education is so important, and to have a safe place run by and for First Nations" is something that makes Richmond feel proud to be a part of.

Construction on the new pavilion is supposed to commence after the completion of the longitudinal study in March by Quebec's education ministry. Funding for the project is still being secured, and will be split between the university, and the MEQ. Exact percentages of who pays what has yet to be determined, although the overall estimated cost of the project is just over \$5 million.

UQAT dean Robert Paquin thinks the idea will be beneficial not only for natives, but non-natives as well. "I think it's a good idea for both natives and non-natives because with the First Nation people, what we want is to offer them an opportunity to have information on their needs. For non-First Nations, it's great because we can take courses there to learn the tradition, the culture, and everything about the First Nations people."

According to Paquin, there are services which cater to natives in Quebec, but none are bilingual as the new pavilion will be. "It's a new concept to have a bilingual pavilion, for example in Chicoutimi you can take courses, but only in French. In McGill

they have courses for First Nations, but only in English."

Rebecca Moore, a Cree from Waswanipi, is the First Nations councilor. Moore works closely with Native students to help them in making important decisions that will help shape their future. "We had interviews to find out the needs of the people, what kind of programs to develop. There was a lot of research to develop this program here. It's really adapted to the communities."

Moore has visions of what the new pavilion can be for the generations to come. She puts in long hours at the university, and is also studying part time for her master's in teaching. When asked if she'd like to teach in the new pavilion, she replied, "I'd love to, it's like a dream."

"Myself, when I was a student here, I'd get so discouraged because there were no services for us."

As of 2004, that might change. "The people who will work there will be First Nations, teachers, councilors, secretaries, professionals, everybody," quipped Paquin.

It's a very exciting time for Native people, let's hope this is just a glimpse of things to come.



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Mohawk Revolution!

by Steve Bonspiel

There is a Revolution going on in Kahnawake Mohawk territory. Not the kind that one would associate with violence, and guns, and an overthrown government, but more like a Revolution of the mind.

Iris Montour is the editor, and co-founder of Revolution magazine. According to her, before Revolution, there was no outlet for the youth to voice their opinions. "My cousin (Tracey Deer) and I figured that it'd be a good idea, we realized there was a gap in the community, a space for something like this."

A while back, Deer decided that she no longer had the time, and unfortunately, had to give up something which they both created together.

Revolution is made for the youth, by the youth, with over 180 different young people having contributed so far. Submissions that have been accepted include student profiles, artwork, poems, as well as any other creative stories, and opinions expressed by the youth of Kahnawake. The best part as far as the youth is concerned, is they actually get paid for their thoughts. Aside from Montour, Revolution has a staff of three other people who take care of the management of the office and sales, as well as graphic design.

When Revolution was at the proposal stage, "we really underestimated how much work it was going to be." Which, for the first few issues, created some unexpected problems. "I can clearly remember us typing out the proposal and laughing about layout and basically thinking that we would just be able to throw it together." Four graphic designers later, Revolution has finally settled on someone they can count on, Montour's boyfriend, affectionately known as Chief.

The magazine was well received by the community, "The support has been great. All of our sponsors and our distributors are really awesome. They're friendly, and they're really encouraging. The community has just been really positive about it, and that's why I think it's going to work because the community has accepted it so well."

One of the main goals of the magazine is freedom of expression. Censorship, for the most part, is non-existent in the pages of Revolution. "As the editor I don't feel like I have to believe in everything the people are saying, nor edit things that I don't think are valid. It's supposed to be kind of like a free for all, like an open arena."

"We found out what we have to do is kind of just leave it in the hands of the community, of the contributors, and of the youth."



This philosophy sometimes drew criticism from community members as well as the ire of one of the writers in the local paper, the Eastern Door. The writer in question went on to blame Revolution for the recent spree of vandalism, and graffiti in Kahnawake, simply because one of Revolutions writers had expressed their opinion on "tagging" (graffiti). The Eastern Doors writer took it upon himself to cast blame on her, even though she never once said in her article that it was cool to spray paint other people's property. "The Eastern Doors problem comes from varying levels, and I think they're kind of threatened by our presence. I mean they're basically attacking our journalistic stand-point."

Funding for the project has been made possible through Kahnawake's Brighter Futures program. According to Montour, their proposal for a youth magazine in Kahnawake was accepted in June, 2002. After eight issues and a few bumps in the road, Revolution is as strong, and as solid as it has ever been.

In recent issues, Revolution has started to lean more towards artistic content. "The way it's going is it's turning into more of an arts magazine. Not like it was ever supposed to be a news magazine, but it's really taking an artsy turn to it. I don't mind, I'm just going to go with it, I'm here to facilitate, not delegate."

Circulation now stands at 500, but Montour is hopeful that in the next few months, that number will expand to 2000. "Ideally I'm sure everybody that starts a magazine would like to see it go national, or international, but I'm not there yet. Say within the next year I'd love to see it up to around 5000."

Native youth definitely need a way to express themselves, and with an outlet like Revolution, their voices can be heard, loud and clear.

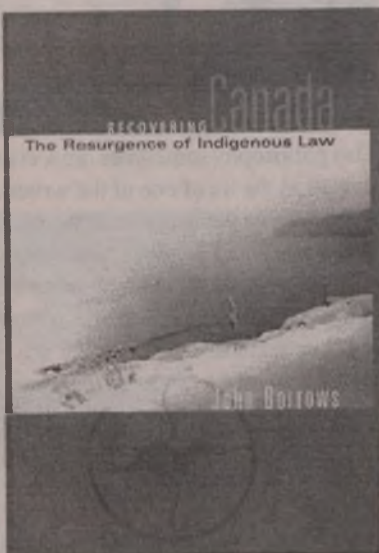
the Dogs Ear

Recovering Canada The Resurgence of Indigenous Law

By John Burrows
University of Toronto Press 2002
Review by Will Nicholls

In academic circles they publish or die. We can all be glad that John Burrows decided on the publishing route. His book *Recovering Canada* is a winner and a must read for anyone who has to deal with the law and aboriginal issues and culture. I know it opened my eyes in a new direction right from the start. But where it really grabbed it was on page 13 with the title *First Nations Law: Traditions, the Trickster and Transformations*. This looked at how courts can and have included indigenous law within the court system. Navajo courts have used stories and legends in helping to determine native jurisprudence. In one case of the Navajo Nation vs. MacDonald, Chief MacDonald was the tribal chairman and the court was used to determine if the chairman had breached his fiduciary duties by receiving kick-backs and bribes from contractors dealing with the Navajo Nation. The court in its ruling referred to the story of the "Twin Heroes" and said "After the epic battles were fought by the Twin Heroes, the Navajo people set on the path of becoming a strong nation. It became necessary to elect naat'aaniis by consensus of the people. A naat'aanii was not a powerful politician nor was he a mighty chief. A naat'aanii was chosen based on his ability to help the people survive and whatever authority he had was based upon that ability and trust placed in him by the people." The court ruled that the people could remove such a person.

Burrows says that many legends and stories here in Canada could form the same basis for indigenous jurisprudence and work hand in hand with civil or common law courts. In effect he is saying that the two are not mutually exclusive but can merge at times. All in all an interesting and thought provoking books.



Song of Rita Joe Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq Poet

Review by Lorraine Pachano from Chisasibi



Rita Joe is a famous poet. She has written many books of poetry.

Rita did not plan to be a writer when she was young. She started in her 30s. She wrote about her real life experiences; her past and present, and what her children and the people experienced. Her husband encouraged her to write and so did her children. And suddenly she wrote a poem about Eskasoni, her adopted hometown. She looked around her surroundings and saw the beauty in her land and culture. She decided to emphasize the positive. She sent this poem to a local Mi'kmaq newspaper.

This poem was printed and from that came everything else. She was asked to write a monthly column for the *Micmac News*. She began researching more and more about her people. Then she expanded this into learning Mi'kmaq more thoroughly. All of this writing and her growing involvement with her people resulted in more and more poems. She was asked to publish a book of her poems. She became known as a poet and began to win prizes.

Reading about Rita Joe and her life has helped me realize that we can never be sure what the future will bring. I think that I would recommend this book to anyone. Our school has a movie that was made by the National Film Board about Rita Joe and Eskasoni. We see her at home and on the land. She reads her poems. It is a wonderful experience to see her and the place where she lives. It makes the book more meaningful.

Number the Stars, written by Lois Lowry

Review by Andrea Napash from Chisasibi

This is a suspenseful, realistic book that takes place during the Second World War. The main character of the book is a 10-year-old girl who wants to save her best friend, Ellen Rosen. It is 1943 and the Nazi soldiers are marching in their town. The Jews of Denmark are being "relocated," and so Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be part of their family.

This is a book about the struggle for survival. Both of the girls in this book were very brave considering what they had to fight against on a daily basis. There is both joy and sadness in the story.

When I was reading the first chapter, I wanted to continue reading to find out what was going to happen at the end. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in understanding how the holocaust affected the Jewish people of Denmark and their neighbours.



Another Cree woman's story

It makes me really sad to hear or to read these kinds of stories about women being abused by their husbands. I too, would like to share my own experience of an abusive relationship with my husband. As I look back through the days, the times that turned into years, living with him and his constant drinking and abuse; how much I've put up with him. No one has that right to say or better yet, to judge, and say that I deserved it.

The abuse began a few months after we got married. He would go out and drink, he'd come home angry. Other times he wouldn't come home at all. Sometimes he'd be out drinking for three or four days. I guess during that time he was away, that's when he was told about a lot of things and that's why he would come home angry. Some of his friends would tell him stories; actually I should say made-up stories. Some friends they were, huh!

Here is one of his many accusations or should I say one of his many fights with me. He came home accusing me of standing by the window looking for him; he was so drunk that he barely remembered what he did when he came home. I was in bed with two kids when he came into the room, jumped on me, started punching me, pulling at my hair. At the same time he was talking, saying all sorts of things, accusing me of this and that. I had to do something so he wouldn't wake up the kids. I pushed him away, I ran towards the living room, he grabbed me again, threw me on the floor and he sat on top of me with his legs on my arms so I couldn't move at all. He grabbed me by the hair banging my head on the floor over and over, and then he started choking me, I couldn't move and started to panic. I said to myself; "this is it, this is the end." I almost gave up. Then I heard my kids crying. All I saw was the darkness, nothing but pitch black darkness. I moved my head, I felt something on my lips and it was his arm which I bit. He had no choice but to move his other arm and I pushed him away. That was one of his many fights and angry ways of coming home.

As we moved on and looking at the causes, looking at the times when I got beaten; it's through people's mouths, gossip, rumors, made-up stories, stories about my person, my personal life, which some think that they have the rights to assume or even accuse others of doing such things when they are not even true. Yet these kind of people never realized or knew the damages they've done to others. I for one would be ashamed to talk bad about someone or assume that they are doing this and that.

One of the biggest issues here in our community is assump-

tion. People assuming this and that about others, making up stories based on those assumptions and creating situations between couples that are terrible and often tragic.

Now that my husband no longer drinks, one cannot say that he's fully recovered from his drinking, he is on the road to it. It's been a few years now that he's stopped drinking, I don't even know exactly. Now when he gets angry, he's more reasonable, he knows that being violent won't solve any situations at all.

As for me, I began my healing journey since 1996, I still am on my journey. I've learned a lot in the past few years about our relationship, our couple. There were times that I wanted to just walk out forever, never looking back. As of today, I still feel that way; to just walk out. I guess I'm too optimistic to do that.

The hard times or the trouble we went through in the past 19 years to me seems to have helped us in our relationship; we have a stronger relationship now. It's like building a tower or even a house, you try to build it strong enough so it can withstand anything, it's kind of like that also in a relationship. I guess I can say it all adds up to love and forgiveness, to build a strong relationship. *Forgiveness* is a big word. *Acceptance* is another big word. I call them big words, that's how some people look at them or turn them into, it's very hard for them to have these words in their lives, I guess that's why they think they're such *big words*. Think about it for a moment, the meaning of these two words: forgiveness and acceptance.

In the issue of the *Nation* vol. 10-2 on Dec 13, 2002, in the article "A Cree woman's story," the abused victim stated "people were so harsh towards me ... there's a part about judging also ... people hurting each others by telling stories behind their backs." Those three statements do go around in every community. If only we could all learn how to accept each other then you wouldn't have so much of the judging and the talking too.

My understanding regarding relationships, the causes of the relationships, most of them that end up in divorce, separation, spouse abuse and other problems; the cause of them are those things that go around in our communities, like I call them big words: people can't accept others (the good or the bad), people can't forgive.

That's all I have to say for now. I hope I will get another chance to write another article in the near future. But I'll remain anonymous. I will be Anonymous #3.



Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival



March 5 – 9, 2003

Moose Factory, Ontario

The Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival is a five-day event that will showcase a variety of films and videos by local and regional Aboriginal filmmakers in several venues around the community of Moose Factory.

The festival also aims to provide a venue for resource information in media arts to assist and support the development of a new generation of artists pursuing a career in film, video and television.

The role of media arts in the preservation and promotion of the Cree way of life, culture and language is another aspect that the festival will represent through its selection of films/videos and invited filmmakers, as well as in the festival's panel discussions, seminars, information sessions, booths and workshops.

For more information contact:

**Paul M. Rickard
Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival
P.O. Box 388
Moose Factory, Ontario P0L 1W0**

E-mail: okimah@mac.com

**Montreal Tel: (514) 840-1338
Moose Factory Tel: (705) 658-6987**



BECOMING A DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER

Part Four: Hitting the festival circuit

by Paul M. Rickard

In most cases today, documentaries are made on videotape and screened for television on video. In some cases, a film print of a documentary is made for the festival circuit, as in the case of my NFB film *Okimah*. One of the reasons that film print was made was to have it available for screening at a film festival.

Film festivals are basically weeklong events that screen films/videos to a specific audience and held in various communities across the continent. There are the bigger film festivals such as the Toronto International Film Festival, Cannes, and Sundance. But there are also many smaller ones, such as ImagineNative in Toronto, Land-Insights in Montreal and countless others. The most recent one being the Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival in Moose Factory, which I am putting on from March 3 to 9, 2003.

These festivals are a great opportunity to showcase your work to a wider audience, usually an audience that appreciates film. Film and video projects have to be submitted to festivals by the producers or filmmakers to be screened during these events. Now, *Okimah* was submitted to numerous festivals and only ended up being accepted only to eight festivals, Vancouver International Film Festival, Sudbury Film Festival, Aboriginal Voices Festival in Toronto, San Francisco American Indian Film Festival, New York Indian Film Festival, Far North Film Festival in Yellowknife, Documentarier Film and Video Festival in Montreal and LandInsights also in Montreal.

Although *Okimah* was accepted at the above mentioned festivals, I only attended the ones in Montreal, Sudbury, Toronto, Vancouver and New York.



Going to a film festival is a great opportunity to show your film to a live audience, introduce it and answer some questions regarding the making of the film or the issue raised in your film. It was interesting to see a general reaction to the film: people were impressed by its portrayal of a traditional way of life in contemporary times. Others found it too slow, other found it educational. One reaction I noticed was how different it was to a



non-Cree speaking audience vs a Cree audience.

I had originally showed the film in Moose Factory before it went into the festival circuit. The screening at the Ministik School gym was packed and the community even had a community feast before the screening. The home audience reacted with amazement and laughter in the right places. The majority of the home audience understood what my dad was saying in Cree and laughed along with him on some of his stories. But when I showed the same film with an non-Native audience in the south, they did not laugh as much, as they only had to rely on the subtitles of my dad's stories.

This is a classical example of how translating and using subtitles for the Cree language takes a lot away from the viewing experience for those who don't know the language. I guess this is what happens when I watch an Italian or Spanish film with subtitles, the subtlety and expression of the Cree language can easily get lost in the translation.

So basically, during the festivals you also have the opportunity to make other filmmakers, mingle, make connections, and look for your next job. It's a very refreshing and rewarding experience to attend a film festival, especially meeting other filmmakers who are in the same boat as you are. It's also a great time to exchange ideas, stories and business cards. The best film festival I went to was the New York Indian Film Festival which was held at the American Indian Museum in New York City, a few blocks away from what was the World Trade Center. I met some other Canadians, but other Native American filmmakers from throughout the States and Spanish people from Central and South America.

I also had the opportunity to see some great films done by other Aboriginal filmmakers from around the world. It's great to see their work and how they do their own stories, just like I do my own stories. It was great to see those works and meet the filmmakers themselves.

These festivals are not what they are cracked up to be in most cases. For one thing, you aren't the only one showing your film.

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You sometimes see some high profile filmmakers or actors or directors and you feel left out. At the Vancouver festival I actually saw some of the actors from *X Files* TV show. Those larger events can be overwhelming, but it helps to have a artist liaison working and helping you out so you don't feel lost. In the case of *Okimah*, the National Film Board had their own PR (press representatives) at the festivals, pushing the film and setting up interviews and so forth. I did some radio spots and a CTV interview at the Vancouver festival.

Of all the film festivals that *Okimah* was submitted to, it only won one award at the Far North Film Festival in Yellowknife where it was named "Best of the Fest." But I did not attend that one at all. It was too bad. I could have picked up the award instead of it being mailed to me. A plaque and a gift came as the award. With this award, I can call myself, "an award-winning director!!" And why not?

Usually a film or video has a one-year shelf life on the festival circuit before it's broadcast on TV and hits the video sales. *Okimah* was eventually shown on VISION TV and APTN in 1990. It's still sometimes shown over the years. And it's also being sold on videotape through the National Film Board of Canada video library.

My experience of showcasing my film was excellent, especially the one in my home town of Moose Factory, I was honored to be acknowledged for the work I do in filmmaking. I think sometimes in communities up north there is a lack of recognition placed on the artists that excel in their profession. We tend to acknowledge our own Native teachers, nurses, lawyers and politicians. But I still think that there needs to be a acknowledgement of the artists who are contributing to their communities and people who are raising issues through their films. And that is one of the reasons why I will be putting on the Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival in Moose Factory.

I hope this festival will be the start of an annual event for the community, to showcase the work of filmmakers that come from the James Bay region. There are quite a few of them, and will be attending the event in Moose Factory. It's an opportunity for some of them to return home after leaving to work outside the community and it's also a chance for the people in town to meet and talk to them. Hopefully, it may inspire some young people to follow in the footsteps of the invited filmmakers.

*Paul M. Rickard is a filmmaker from Moose Factory, Ontario who has been involved in filmmaking for over 15 years. He directed *Okimah* and produced the series *Finding Our Talk* for APTN, which will be showcased at the Weeneebeg Aboriginal Film and Video Festival in Moose Factory. In the next issue Paul will discuss becoming an independent filmmaker and starting up his own company, Mushkeg Media Inc. For more information about the Weeneebeg festival in Moose Factory, check out the ad in this issue or call (705) 658-6987 or email: okimah@mac.com*



URBAN NATIVE

by tsa

I feel pretty, oh so pretty

It was brought to my attention the other day that some people might only talk to me because of the way I look. Which is funny on many levels to me, but it did remind me that, gasp, some people still judge others based on looks. This being said in spite of Lucy Liu's claim of "judging people based on how they look, that's not American."

This was in the aftermath of the twin towers coming down and there were mass prejudices towards anyone who looked or sounded Arabic. Could it be true that human beings still follow that ancient silly practice of judging people based on how they look or have we realized Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of judging people based on the content of their character? A famous writer once said "it is only the shallow who do not judge by appearances." Which seems to imply that all those of us who do judge on such supposedly superficial things, are really not as superficial as others think.

What does it mean to judge someone in this way anyways? Are we decreeing that they are somehow officially aesthetically pleasing (AP)? Do we arrange for them to receive a medal or stamped and crested document or something? What does it mean to be AP anyways? Who decides what is AP? Are there guidelines to follow? And if we do see someone who we consider AP, are we really more inclined to engage in a conversation with that person more so than the person over in the other corner who is not AP? If so, why? Do we think that the AP person is somehow better, more interesting or more worthy of being spoken with than someone who we do not consider AP? Why is it so important anyways!?

Truth be told, we do judge by appearances. Maybe not always in the simple way that comes to mind, not only on AP attributes such as the face and body, but also based on clothes, cars, homes and electronic toys. Name brands have long been associated with images and lifestyles in the media that many people believe in and strive for. Some people do tend to think that they can best associate with those who purchase the same things as they do, they are likely to have more in common, which may be true in some cases. Thus in a crowded room, perhaps someone will talk to you because you are wearing the same brand of high class jeans that they are wearing or have at home.

But it's not all bad though. One of our most important relationships is determined in some part by looks. We end up

choosing our mates not exclusively because they are AP to us, but let's face it, they do have to be AP to us if we plan on spending the rest of our lives with them.

There are some cases where people are, and should expect to be, judged in some way based on the way they look, as with models. The whole world of modeling is based exclusively on the way one looks aesthetically. There are some models that make it in the biz because they are a little different looking and do not possess the more classic look of beauty, but in general they have the right bodily proportions and they are AP. In the general world, appearances have become important. It's no secret that one can get ahead in the world by being well dressed and well groomed. It's not the only reason for getting ahead, but it certainly helps more than hinders advancement. There are even stories out there where by people have gone into stores dressed shabbily in unwashed clothes and were not served or were dealt with rather rudely. The same person would then change into a clean set of clothes, all primped up and go back to the same store. Upon entering they would be very warmly received and treated with much respect, kind of like Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*.

It reminds me of a story I once read about a Japanese emperor who went to a restaurant dressed in regular clothes. He was refused entry by the maitre d' and pushed out of the restaurant. The emperor went home, changed into his royal robes and went back to the restaurant. The maitre d' welcomed him, treated him with much respect and showed him to the best table. The emperor proceeded to remove the royal robes and place them on a chair, much to the shock of the maitre d'. He then left saying that it was apparent the robes were what the maitre d' really wanted at the restaurant since he had been there only minutes ago and was refused entry.

The reason that I thought the comment was so funny is that while I am vain to the point that I do think the song is about me and sometimes I sing the song from *West Side Story* about being "pretty and witty and gay," I don't consider myself that AP by any standards. I don't consider myself particularly un-pleasing to the eye either. I am pretty much accustomed to my physical attributes. I have been staring back at my reflection in the mirror long enough now to not really care so much about that stuff. I personally would rather be judged if it must be that way, on the content of my character than anything else, and I like to think that is how I judge people too.



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1973 - 1979	September 2003
Before 1973	ANYTIME

Waste not Want not

Xavier Kataquapit

It is nine o'clock in the morning on a bright, beautiful, cloudless day in the middle of February. The temperature is about minus 30. As the day wears on it will warm up to minus 25 and then dip down again by evening. I am packing up my snowmachine for a ride out on the land for the day. It is a working day and I am going out to gather firewood for our home. Although we have enough wood to last several weeks, gathering more using a snowmachine, when time is available, is always a good idea.

I am driving out to a place that my brother in law Clarence Shisheesh spotted earlier in the week. He is with me on this run. I hitch up a toboggan that is more like a large wooden box to my Safari 377 Bombardier snowmachine. I load the sled with a container of extra gasoline for the day and wrap a chainsaw and an axe with an old worn out sleeping bag. I pack everything into the sled and tie them all down with some rope. Before I leave, mom calls me back into the house to remind me to take a thermos of hot tea with some bannock that she has packaged into an old canvas back pack.

It is a short ride over to meet Clarence. He is ready and waiting with his own snowmobile and sled. We head out early to take advantage of the day. At this time of year, the sun rises at about eight in the morning and sets on the horizon by five.

We ride out of the community and down the steep bank of the river and onto the river ice. We head west and drive on well travelled trails along the river. We travel for an hour in the cold weather. The cold is bearable as we are dressed in layers of clothes and snowmobile pants and parkas. When we finally reach our destination I can see that the trip was worthwhile. This find of prime firewood is very satisfying. It is a forest of tall trees that were burnt in a fire the previous summer. These still standing dead trees are dry and just perfect for firewood. It is good to be able to take advantage of what nature has provided us rather than having to cut living trees from the land.

We unhitch our snowmachines and begin the task of building a trail to access the forest. We wade into the snow to look for a good spot to ride our snowmachines. Once we establish our trail we use the snowmachines to plow through the deep snow. The first pass is difficult and the snowmobiles frequently sink into the snow and get stuck. We work an hour until finally we finish a path circling the forest to the best trees that we have marked to take home. The trees are brought down as close as possible to the trail to save us time and work. Once the trees are down they are cut into fire log lengths. We bring the snowmobiles and sleds around and load both toboggans to the top with logs



for the first trip home. We cut more logs and pile them for a second run later in the day and for future trips.

Before packing up for the ride home we sit down for a quick drink of hot tea and some bannock. We are tired from the work we have completed. We sit on our log piles and pass a thermos cup of hot tea between each other. The tall trees stand over us and the long charred branches that remain stretch out over our heads. In the distance, a healthy growth of pines show their green branches which are iced in layers of snow. There is a cold silence when we stop talking to simply listen. Once in a while a hearty crow caws in the forest and the sound travels for miles reverberating in wilderness.

The weather does not affect us as much while we are working but as we sit resting, the cold begins to seep through our layers of clothing. With our energy renewed we bundle up and start our snowmachines. We head down our new trail to the river for the trip back home. It is good to know that the logs we are carrying will provide our families with warmth from the wood stoves for weeks to come. The best part is that we did not have to take any living trees for this purpose.

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